GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:914
ANSWERED ON:16.07.2014
EXTINCTION OF RARE SPECIES
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any survey to identify the species of rare plants and animals in the country, which are on the verge of extinction;

(b) if so, the details of such plants and animals ; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to preserve the flora and fauna in the country and to expand the area under forest ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) & (b) Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), mandated for survey of plant and animal diversity respectively in the country, have been carrying out survey and documentation of floral and faunal resources of the country including rare and threatened species. As per the data available with the Botanical Survey of India, out of 19,156 species of vascular plants (Angiosperms, Gymnosperms, Pteridophytes) so far recorded from the country, 1236 species belong to different threatened categories like Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, etc. Among animals, as per the Red Data Book of International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 57 species have been identified in India as Critically Endangered in various classes namely birds (13 species), mammals (11 species), reptiles (6 species), fishes (5 species), amphibians (19 species), Spiders (2 species) and Corals (1 species).

(c) Towards conservation of rare & threatened species, Government of India has established protected area networks such as National Parks, Sanctuaries, Biosphere Reserves, Ramsar sites for in-situ conservation besides other traditional conservation practices like sacred groves which primarily covers habitats of threatened megafauna such as tiger, rhino, elephant etc. Conservation oriented legislation namely Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and Biodiversity Act, 2002, regulate the protection of forests and access to their components, including the rare species. Under the provisions of Section 38 of Biodiversity Act 2002, state wise identification of species is carried out for taking conservation measures. In this regard, Ministry has already issued notifications for 14 States viz. Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand, Mizoram Orissa, Meghalaya, Goa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Tripura. Legal protection has been provided to many species of wild animals and plants against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, which has been amended & made more stringent. The State Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around the Protected Areas.

BSI has brought a number of threatened plants under cultivation in its Acharya Jagdish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden in Howrah, Botanic Garden Indian Republic, Noida and other associated botanic gardens of its regional centres for their ex-situ conservation, thereby complementing the in-situ conservation of such species in protected areas established in different bio-geographical regions of the Country. In addition to these, Botanical Gardens associated with universities/Institutes have also successfully conserved/multiplied several threatened plants with the help of Ministry under its "Assistance to Botanic Garden" scheme.

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of `Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats` has been modified in 2008-09 by including a new component namely `Recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats` to provide special measures to support such species. Presently 16 species have been identified for recovery.